United Nations A/56/921

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 April 2002
English
Original: Spanish

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda items 28, 35, 74, 95, 97, 100, 103, 108, 111, 113, 115, 119, 164 and 166

Culture of peace

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

General and complete disarmament

Macroeconomic policy questions

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

International migration and development, including the question of the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development to address migration issues

Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

International drug control

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Human rights questions

02-34120 (E) 240402 240402

Establishment of the International Criminal Court

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Note verbale dated 15 April 2002 from the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations, as the pro tempore Secretariat of the Rio Group, presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit the San José Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the Rio Group on 12 April 2002 at the conclusion of the Group's sixteenth Summit held in San José, Costa Rica.

The Permanent Mission of Costa Rica would be grateful if the attached document could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council and the General Assembly under items 28, 35, 74, 95, 97, 100, 103, 108, 111, 113, 115, 119, 164 and 166.

New York, 15 April 2002

Annex to the note verbale dated 15 April 2002 from the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

San José Declaration

We, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action, the Rio Group, meeting at the sixteenth Summit held in the city of San José on 11 and 12 April 2002, committed to the principles and objectives of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration of 18 December 1986 and the Veracruz Act of 19 March 1999:

1. Renew our commitment to continue strengthening the Rio Group as the principal mechanism for dialogue and concerted political action of Latin America and the Caribbean and a valid spokesman for the region before other regions and international forums.

2. Reaffirm our irrevocable commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of American States.

3. Reiterate that the consolidation, protection and promotion of democracy are essential conditions for ensuring justice, equity, freedom, peace and the sustainable development of our peoples. Consequently, we welcome the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and we undertake to continue efforts designed to reinforce democratic institutions and the rule of law in the countries of the region.

4. Reiterate our recognition of the universal validity of human rights and our commitment to their full enjoyment, above and beyond any constraints of a political, cultural or developmental nature. In this context, we affirm our decision to improve and strengthen the mechanisms for the defence and promotion of those rights in both the inter-American and United Nations systems.

5. Confirm, in particular, our interest in examining and identifying possible reforms to improve the functioning and effectiveness of the non-treaty mechanisms of the United Nations and also to strengthen the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The findings of this process will contribute to the work of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) in the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

6. Draw attention to the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court now that it has been ratified by more than 60 States. We underscore the historic importance of the inauguration of this permanent international criminal jurisdiction that will investigate and punish those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity. We urge those countries that have not acceded to or ratified this Statute to consider doing so promptly. At the same time, we call on States to maintain and expand their collaboration in prosecuting and bringing to trial those allegedly responsible for offences defined in other international instruments that are in force.

7. Reaffirm our unstinted commitment to fight corruption in all its shapes and forms, and assert once again that transparency in public administration and in accountability are necessary factors for the consolidation, stability, prestige and credibility of democratic institutions, and the economic and social development of our peoples. Accordingly, we agree to strengthen mutual cooperation in order to avoid impunity for acts of corruption, in accordance inter alia, with the provisions of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and the objectives of its Follow-up Mechanism. We will hold consultations periodically to ensure that our region plays an active part in the negotiation of the United Nations convention against corruption.

8. Vigorously condemn and reject terrorism in all its shapes and forms and support regional and international cooperation and coordination measures to combat it while ensuring strict respect for human rights and compliance with international humanitarian law and other rules and principles of international law. In that regard, we will act in accordance with the resolutions and instruments of the United Nations, the inter-American system and other pertinent initiatives, particularly by establishing mechanisms for the exchange of information and for judicial cooperation that facilitates the prevention and suppression of terrorist acts. The fight against terrorism is also based on fostering a culture of peace, tolerance and solidarity. We agree to promote the adoption of the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism during the thirty-second General Assembly of the Organization of American States to be held in Barbados.

9. Renew our commitment to the fight against the global problem of drugs, including synthetic drugs, recognizing the need to develop joint action against the different aspects of this scourge, based on the principle of shared responsibility, integral treatment of the problem, and cooperation. We reaffirm our conviction that there is an urgent need to contribute effectively to the sustainability of alternative development, by a greater liberalization of the markets for substitution products. We also underscore the need to attack other types of criminal activities linked to this problem, which magnify it, such as arms-trafficking, transnational crime, money-laundering and terrorism. Moreover, we reiterate our support for the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and its multilateral evaluation mechanism because we consider that its work makes a valuable contribution to multilateral cooperation in this area.

10. Reaffirm our commitment to complying with international legal instruments on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We also agree to increase confidence- and security-building measures at the bilateral, regional and global level, particularly within the framework of the Organization of American States and the United Nations, where participation in the Register of Conventional Arms makes an important contribution to international peace and security. In this context, we reiterate the importance of the forms for standardizing accounting systems for military expenditures.

11. We support the proposal for an effective and gradual reduction of defence expenditures in the region leading to the use of part of the military budgets to combat poverty by implementing education, health and other social programmes, taking into account the security needs of each country and

current expenditure levels. In this connection, we welcome recent and future progress at both the bilateral and multilateral levels to implement this objective, which was established in the Declaration of Santiago, and we agree to exchange information on the initiatives and actions adopted by our countries to put this proposal into practice.

12. Reiterate our profound concern about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and renew the political decision to prevent, combat and eliminate this trade in accordance with the programme of action of the United Nations Conference on the subject and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Material.

13. Appreciate the agreements reached during the International Conference on Financing for Development held in the city of Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002 which provided a crucial historic opportunity to undertake a renewed partnership designed to fashion a new global agreement aimed at attaining a fairer and more democratic world. To that end, we urge all countries to comply fully with the Consensus reached at the Conference and we instruct our Ministers responsible for these matters to act together to implement and follow up on the Consensus.

14. Concur, in this respect, in emphasizing the particular urgency of implementing the following measures: opening up markets to exports of goods and services from our countries, particularly from the agricultural sector; elimination of customs and non-tariff barriers, unjustified subsidies and protectionist measures that distort and affect the normal development of our trade; granting special and differential treatment to the small economies of the hemisphere, among others; increasing official development assistance; and seeking innovative mechanisms to tackle the debt problems of developing countries, including middle-income countries. Moreover, we should ensure good governance and the rule of law, fiscal and monetary equilibrium, and strengthen South-South cooperation, giving special attention to mutual trade liberalization and reciprocal access to investments. Lastly, we request the international financial institutions to provide opportune and transparent information, fresh resources and efficient mechanisms with a view to preventing, channelling and alleviating financial crises, in order to help strengthen the international financial system and create a new world alliance that categorically supports the development process in all our countries.

15. Endorse the results of the fourth session of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held in Doha, Qatar, and do our utmost to ensure that the new round of negotiations includes development-related issues and leads to success in many important areas such as the opening up of developed markets to agricultural commodities, textiles and other products, special and differential treatment, dispute settlement, services and implementation-related issues, in order to advance on the path to the consolidation of a multilateral trade system that is more just, transparent and equitable.

16. Emphasize the importance of negotiations aimed at setting up a free trade area of the Americas by 2005. We assign the highest priority to negotiations taking place within and among subregional or regional integration schemes, which will make it possible to consolidate the efforts of countries to open up their

economies and will give rise to new economic and commercial relations between our countries, thus enabling them to achieve higher levels of growth and development and to modernize their economies.

17. Express our support for the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean and of the European Union, to be held in Madrid, Spain, on 17 and 18 May 2002. The Madrid Summit will provide a suitable opportunity for the European Union and the Latin American and Caribbean region to establish a genuine bi-regional strategic association. In this regard, we stress the importance of the association agreements, which allow for a reassessment of the political dialogue and of economic and financial relations and bi-regional cooperation with a view to adjusting them to the changed circumstances and needs of the twenty-first century.

18. Welcome the implementation of the Association Agreement between Mexico and the European Union and the Agreement between the European Union and the Caribbean countries, as well as the progress made with regard to the Association Agreements between the European Union and Chile and between the European Union and the Southern Common Market. We also support the steps being taken to establish association agreements between the European Union and the Andean Community and between the European Union and Central America.

19. Reiterate that the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002 provides a unique opportunity for the international community to put Agenda 21 into practice and to adopt an implementation programme focusing on action. Such a programme, based on the principle of shared but diverse responsibilities, should provide, inter alia, for more active international cooperation in setting up early warning systems to prevent and mitigate natural disasters and lessen the adverse impact of climate change, particularly with regard to fragile mountain ecosystems. We also look forward to the entry into force, at the World Summit, of the Kyoto Protocol. We confirm our willingness to work in coordination with each other at this World Summit.

20. Reiterate the concern we have expressed in other international forums regarding the risks involved in the transport of radioactive materials and hazardous waste near the coastlines or waterways of member countries. We call on the international community to continue its efforts to improve existing international regulations concerning safety measures for the transport of such materials.

21. Recognize the importance of encouraging the participation of all stakeholders in civil society and of their organizations in deepening and consolidating democracy. We reaffirm our willingness to strengthen the role of civil society in our countries and recognize its increased contribution to the design, evaluation and implementation of public policies and its participation in international forums, and we will continue our analysis of these issues.

Strengthening of the family and the struggle against poverty

22. Reaffirm the consensus expressed in the Veracruz Act to the effect that poverty is a social injustice and a potential threat to the stability of our countries, and

that its eradication constitutes a global responsibility that requires urgent attention. The many causes and the diverse nature of poverty must be taken into account in the design of public policies and in efforts to strengthen the family as an institution. We recognize that families are affected by conditions and changes in the economic, social, technological and cultural spheres, given the pluralistic orientation of different State policies and international agreements on the subject.

23. Stress the importance of the family unit as a natural and fundamental element of society, a vehicle for the passing on of values, a point of contact for different generations and an essential framework for integrated personal growth.

24. Recognize that poverty violates the fundamental rights of individuals and diminishes human dignity. Consequently, the States of our region will give priority to furthering public policies designed to enable individual members of the family unit to improve their abilities, and we will continue to implement strategies for combating poverty and its exclusionary effects. We realize that promoting fair access to and full enjoyment of human rights within the family contributes to human development.

25. Are determined to continue investing in efforts to significantly improve the access to and quality of education. Education is the only means for making better citizens and ensuring greater equality of opportunity. It is an effective tool for offsetting social inequity and, by reducing disparities at the international level, plays a basic role in determining the competitiveness and development of nations.

26. Undertake to promote and protect the economic, social and cultural rights of our peoples, as enshrined in international legal instruments and reaffirmed in United Nations conferences on social issues.

27. Reaffirm the duty of the State to protect and support families. To this end, we will promote public policies that embody a comprehensive approach to the struggle against poverty based on the needs and guaranteeing the rights of the people concerned. These strategies must take into account the urban-rural dimension and the multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of our societies.

28. Reaffirm the need to incorporate the gender approach in the design and implementation of our policies and of efforts relating to economic and social development and the struggle against poverty. We reiterate the need to increase the exchange of experience, information and programmes in this field so as to enhance the status of women in all spheres.

29. Recognize that the phenomenon of migration causes family breakdown and brings about changes in family structure. A comprehensive analysis must be made of this variable, as well as a study of the psychological, social, economic and cultural effects of migration that need to be considered in designing domestic policy and planning international action relating to the supply of services and the strengthening of families affected by migration.

30. We are concerned about the present situation in the region, given the increase in migration from Latin America and the Caribbean to other regions. We agree to pursue talks with the European Community and with the United States of

America, with a view to analysing the different facets of this issue and seeking ways to normalize the status of such migrants and support job-creation programmes in their countries of origin so as to prevent irregular migration.

31. Reaffirm that free trade is a prerequisite to the creation of real resources that can be effective in reducing poverty. To this end, we stress the importance of our countries' acting in unison in the relevant international forums.

32. Recognize the importance of responsible parenting and integrated, responsible sex education; such programmes must respect the right and duty of parents to educate their children.

33. Undertake to promote programmes for helping teenage mothers so as to enable them to enter and remain in the educational system, inasmuch as education will serve as an instrument for improving their opportunities and those of their children for individual and social development.

34. We will share with each other our positive experiences in combating poverty and strengthening families. We also agree on the importance of putting in place mechanisms for cooperation, so as to facilitate the exchange of experience and the provision of technical advisory services that will enable us to move ahead towards reducing poverty and ensuring the well-being of our families.

35. Express our appreciation to President Alejandro Toledo for his invitation to hold the Seventeenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action (Rio Group) in Peru in 2003.

36. Appreciate the kind offer of the Government of Brazil to host the Eighteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group in 2004.

37. The Heads of State and Government congratulate Dr. Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Echeverría, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, for the excellent organization of this summit meeting, and thank the Costa Rican people for the warm hospitality we have received in the city of San José.

38. This document shall be known as the Declaration of San José.